

we convened meetings that led to the establishment of the Forum for Collaborative HIV Research. And I'm proud that the participants in this forum, AIDS clinicians, researchers, drug companies, insurance companies, and patient advocacy groups, have all expressed their belief that this has become an unprecedented and productive forum for discussing the future of HIV research.

These new scientific advancements in HIV and AIDS treatment light optimism and hope in the AIDS community for people with AIDS and their families. So this is a very positive report this year. And many are now feeling that there is cause for more optimism in the near future.

Through collaborative efforts like this new forum, and the cooperative efforts of the Government and private sector researchers, we'll continue the fight for better and more affordable prevention strategies, vaccines, and microbicides. We will not forget the children. The President is personally committed to focusing this research effort on the crying need to develop pediatric applications of these prevention and treatment strategies and products. And we've all talked a great deal about how to do that.

Working with our team assembled here and with our partners in research, we will continue to knock down every barrier to the development

of successful therapeutics, vaccines, and microbicides until we knock down the last barrier of all, the HIV virus itself.

Now, on behalf of the President, I want to turn this over to Secretary Donna Shalala to expand on the administration's efforts to defeat this terrible disease.

[At this point, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala began the AIDS briefing. While she retrieved a chart for the briefing, the following exchange took place.]

Political Strategist James Carville

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us how you feel about James Carville's effort to mount an offensive on your behalf?

The President. I can't comment.

Q. You're not going to talk to him about it?

Q. How's the Cabinet going?

Q. Any decisions, sir?

President's Health

Q. When can we expect an announcement? Are you glad you've lost your voice? *[Laughter]*

The President. It's a hoax. *[Laughter]*

Q. We suspected as much, sir. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Resignation of Senior Adviser for Policy and Strategy

George Stephanopoulos

December 4, 1996

From the snows of New Hampshire in 1991 until the present day, no one has rendered me better advice, nor given more loyal service to this Nation, than George Stephanopoulos. There's no one in Washington who has a better understanding of the intersection of politics, policy, and the way those affect the American people. His work here at the White House is evidence of his deep respect for our country, its

system of government, and its people. He cannot be replaced.

George will undoubtedly be a great teacher at Columbia. His boundless intellectual curiosity will be put to good use, shaping the leadership of the future.

NOTE: Press Secretary Mike McCurry read this statement during his daily briefing.